

FedEx delivers to High Desert

Boeing 727 donated to train local aircraft mechanics

TATIANA PROPHET JANUARY 11, 2007

Although it's known for delivering cargo, Federal Express delivered something else Wednesday morning — the opportunity to train a local workforce — in the form of a donated jumbo jet.

The signature purple, orange and white cargo plane roared onto Victorville's 15,000-foot runway as a training tool that officials hope will feed the growing demands of aviation companies at the airport and give workers the opportunity to live locally with high-paying jobs.

"This place is really going to flourish," said David Sutton, vice president of FedEx, after donating the Boeing 727 to the Victor Valley College Foundation. He added: "A trained workforce just makes sense."

In a partnership with the college, the city of Victorville and the county's Workforce Development Department, the plane will be the centerpiece of a new curriculum designed to train local aircraft mechanics and eliminate the need to hire out-of-state mechanics.

"We don't have enough mechanics now, and we're trying to bring them in from Florida, New York and Minnesota," said Jim Worsham, former president of Boeing and current business development director at Southern California Logistics Airport. "So we're on a campaign to grow our own."

About a year ago, Worsham asked the 18 aviation-related companies at the airport how many mechanics they would need in the future, and they came back with 100 to 300 a year, he said.

The curriculum, taught in conjunction with Victor Valley College, will certify mechanics in A&P, or airframe and propulsion. The two-year program would have the blessing of the Federal Aviation Administration and can boost the hourly salary of a mechanic by \$4 to \$5 an hour, he said.

Now with the donation of the plane, the training program is well on its way.

"This airplane is one of the greatest training tools that we need," Worsham said.

Instead of working a job in retail or fast food, local high school graduates will have the opportunity to learn a skill without necessarily going to a four-year college, Worsham said.

DAILY PRESS



Victor Valley College Foundation President T. Kirk Riding, left, accepts a key from FedEx pilot Capt. David Massee on Wednesday at SCLA. FedEx donated the jet to the college for classes at the airport.

“Too many of our kids in the area go to high school, then quit their education,” said Worsham, who plans to go recruiting at area schools. “If they don’t have the money or the desire to go to a four-year college, this is something in between.”

Although it’s something in between, the program is a sign to many people that skilled jobs are coming to the valley.

“We’re talking about wages that really provide individuals with the opportunity to have a decent quality of life, to be able to support a family, own a home and do the things that really are part of the American Dream,” said Barbara Halsey, director of the Workforce Development Department.

The courses should start anywhere from three to 12 months, Worsham said, depending on how soon the FAA can certify the curriculum. Students will be able to work as trainees for four hours a day, he added.

For Janice Olson, vice president of the Victor Valley College Foundation, FedEx’s donation is the culmination of a rare partnership.

“With enough people pulling, you can move a 727,” she said.

The 727, named “Bahja” after the daughter of a FedEx employee, is only the second plane that the air cargo giant has donated to a school in California.

FedEx has a handful of 727-100s left in its fleet and will be retiring almost 100 of the later-model 727-200s in 2008, Sutton said. The company is buying Airbus A300-600s and Boeing 777-200s to boost its fleet in the future.

For more information on A&P training, call the Workforce Development Department 909-387-9860. There may be a waiting list, but interested persons will receive updates.

February 27, 2007

SAN BERNARDINO -- Workforce Investment Board gets contract
The California Labor and Workforce Development Agency's Employment Training Panel, at its meeting in Sacramento, approved 22 contracts, totaling more than \$5.4 million in job training funds. This money will provide training to 4,375 California workers for various high-wage occupations.

The Panel awarded a contract for \$179,600 to the County of San Bernardino, Workforce Investment Board to train 100 employees of aircraft rehabilitation companies in skills necessary to improve efficiencies to help each participating company maintain its competitive edge.

The WIB has been involved in the

transformation of the former George Air Force Base to the Southern California Logistics Airport as a commercial logistics airport. Since its establishment in 1994, the SCLA has attracted more than 50 aviation-related businesses, which employ approximately 1,900 workers.

- From Staff Reports

Local aviation industry seeks new, young mechanics

San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board partners with Victor Valley College and Southern California Logistics Airport for training and hiring



By PETER DAY

Star Editor

The skies are opening up for high-flying, hard-driving local high scholars looking for promising careers.

"What we are really after are the young kids fresh out of high school," said Jim Worsham, head of aviation marketing business development for the Southern California Logistics Airport outside of Victorville. "We have something really exciting."

At the center of the excitement is the recently announced \$75,000 contract between the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board and Victor Valley Aviation Education Consortium. The funding will jump-start a program to provide Airframe and Propulsion training at the Southern California Logistics Airport. The money will go toward necessary tools and instructional aids.

Eventually the training is expected to lead to an estimated 150 to 300 new jobs annually, with graduates of the two-year program almost certainly offered jobs of \$20 to \$25 an hour after passing an examination.

"And that's just the beginning," Worsham said.

Experienced aviation mechanics earn about \$32 an hour, added John Hardell, project manager for General Electric's SCLA facility. Those with additional degrees get even higher pay. Several members of the consortium will be visiting local high schools, including campuses in Hesperia, to spread the good word. They hope to talk with students from automotive tech classes.

"The mechanics of automobiles have a lot of similarities with airplanes," Nick Parisi, Victor Valley College's dean of vocational education, said during a conference call with participants and news media members last Thursday.

However, Hardell said, future SCLA workers need to excel at science, math and even reading.

"What's under our hoods wasn't there 30 years ago," Hardell said about the increased amount of training today's automotive students must receive. "We're trying to tell the students how important the sciences are."

As a result, some students who were planning to attend a traditional four-year college or university may be enticed to stay locally and start earning an impressive wage even sooner than they had expected.

"They can work all over the world (after the training), but we want them to work here," Worsham said.

"There are fantastic employment opportunities for our Victor Valley residents," added Barbara Halsey, director of the Workforce Investment Board.

But the new jobs are only the half of it. The 17 SCLA-based companies and others participating in the program are eager to get started because they desperately need more trained, capable and ready workers.

"This is the kind of template the Workforce Investment Board has been looking for," said Phil Cothran, owner of Cothran State Farm and a member of the board. "This particular project just fits the bill. This is going to be a great program for the high desert. It's going to be very successful." When George Air Force Base was closed 15 years ago in 1992, 8,000 jobs were lost and "it was bad, bad times," said who was hired seven years ago to turn things around.

"We were able to bring in the businesses, and we were able to bring in the business."

However, he said, SCLA actually has had to turn down some business due to a lack of a trained workforce. "Our problem is aviation-trained people."

The funding will help build on VVC's two existing classes that support the aviation industry. However, more money will be needed down the road.

The program, which will consist of three classes of 20 students each, which provide a minimum of 1,900 hours per student with focuses in three areas of study. Consortium participants expect the program to kick off by February of 2008 or before.

Victor Valley College is more than happy to provide the educational services.

"As a community college our very name is our mission," said Parisi. "This is the first of what is many cooperative opportunities. We are very happy to be a part of this. We believe training is where the rubber meets the road."

And already there is a waiting list of 35 students, Halsey added.

The program is receiving support from Brad Mitzelfelt, the recently appointed San Bernardino County First District Supervisor.

"I'm very excited about this program," Mitzelfelt said. "I want to do and pledge whatever support I can offer from the Board of Supervisors."

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Aircraft mechanic training takes wing

10:00 PM PST on Sunday, February 25, 2007

By DARLA MARTIN TUCKER
dtucker@thebizpress.com

A Victorville group plans to propel the area's work force with aircraft maintenance classes scheduled to take off this fall or early 2008.

The Victor Valley Aviation Education Consortium will use \$75,000 from the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board to buy equipment for ultrasonic magnetic particle inspections and other sorts of test equipment.

Instructors will use the equipment to train aircraft mechanics at Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville. The consortium's goal is to help airport aerospace companies fill 150 to 300 new mechanics jobs needed each year.

The 1,900-hour course, certified by the Federal Aviation Administration, is aimed at local high school graduates. Students will learn skills working for companies at Southern California Logistics Airport, earning \$10 to \$15 an hour. They will attend classes in the evening.

Airframe classes will include training in sheet metal, welding and aircraft engines. Propulsion courses will include studies on aircraft engines, propellers and fuel systems.

Upon completion, students will take tests to become FAA-certified aircraft mechanics, who earn \$25 an hour. Experienced mechanics earn about \$33 an hour.

The program already has a waiting list of 35 individuals interested in becoming aircraft mechanics, Barbara Halsey, director of the work force investment board, said during a conference call Feb. 22.

The class will begin with about 20 students. A general instruction course, airframe and propulsion courses ultimately will have about 20 students each for a total of 60.

"We're working to build a world-class training institute," Halsey said.

"We need a trained work force to attract large companies so the community doesn't have to commute down the hill," said Nick Parisi, dean of vocational education, at Victor Valley College. Aircraft maintenance training can serve as a springboard to other aviation careers, he said.

The consortium needs about \$500,000 to purchase aircraft engines for students to rebuild, for cockpit simulators and other equipment, instructor John Hardell said during the call. Hardell is plant manager of General Electric at the logistics airport. The company tested its new GE-NEX engine on a 747 at the airport Feb. 22.

First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt will seek additional San Bernardino County training funds, he said during the conference call.

Federal Express donated a Boeing 727 for the program and Victor Valley Community College donated a smaller plane. The airport will provide classroom space. The consortium will need to build a hangar at the airport for aircraft maintenance instruction, said Jim Worsham, airport business development and marketing director.

The airport is located at the former George Air Force Base. The base closed in 1992, ending some 8,000 jobs. The logistics airport has since struggled to re-invent those jobs by attracting some 17 aerospace companies and 2,500 to 3,000 employees. They include General Electric, Pratt & Whitney, Victorville Aerospace and others. Several companies have representatives on the consortium's board.

Victorville Aerospace turned away three big projects from airlines and aircraft leasing companies due to the lack of necessary mechanics, Worsham said. The companies "wanted maintenance repair overhaul and they [Victorville Aerospace] did not have the work force," he said.

The Victorville company needs about 160 mechanics to handle current work, Worsham said.

The consortium plans to recruit high school students. College officials will visit the schools to recruit seniors and encourage high school juniors to focus on physics, math, science and reading in preparation for mechanics training.

Worsham spearheads the consortium, which started in 2005 as an alliance of airport aerospace companies and four community colleges.

"We've been working with Jim Worsham the last one-and-a-half years to make the training center come to fruition," Halsey said.

Victor Valley College expects FAA and college system approval by fall, Parisi said.

Workers currently employed by logistics airport aerospace companies can take certification courses Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Worsham said.



February 24, 2007

SB COUNTY -- Investment board names deputy director

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board has promoted Sandy Harmsen to the position of deputy director of the Workforce Development Department.

As the deputy director, Harmsen will oversee performance and operations of the Employment Resource Centers,

including oversight of internal administrative issues such as policy and further development of the county's work-force development system. She will also be responsible for ensuring that the Workforce Development Department supports the overall goals of the county Economic Development Agency

Grant will fund program to train aviation mechanics

By Michael Rappaport, Staff Writer
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Article Launched: 02/23/2007 12:00:00 AM PST

VICTORVILLE - Good jobs at good wages.

That was the message Thursday when the Victor Valley Aviation Education Consortium announced it was getting a \$75,000 grant from the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board to help fund a new program for aviation mechanics.

Seventeen aviation-related companies at the Southern California Logistics Airport will be working with Victor Valley College to train 150 to 300 mechanics a year to meet local needs.

"We want to help provide the work force needed," said Barbara Halsey, director of the Workforce Investment Board. "We want to help build a world-class training institute for aviation careers up here."

Brad Mitzelfelt, who represents the 1st District on the county Board of Supervisors, pledged whatever support he could offer for the program.

"We will be seeking to provide additional money as needed," he said. "I think this is a great thing that will help turn this into a leading job center."

The program will help kids straight out of high school, who will work four hours a day for \$10-\$15 per hour and then go to classes in the evening.

Once they've completed the certification program, they'll get an immediate raise of \$10 an hour and begin working full time.

Jim Worsham of SCLA, who has been in the aviation business for more than 50 years, said the biggest problem at the airport is a lack of aviation-trained people to fill jobs.

"We have recruited all the trained aviation people we know how to get," he said. "We need maybe 300 new people a year."

Phil Cothran, a member of the WIB, called the program "the kind of template the WIB has been looking for," involving companies in a growth industry that can help provide long-term prosperity in the county.

Instructor John Hardell described the program, which involves 1,900 hours of instruction - 400 in general areas like math and sciences and the other 1,500 divided between the airframe and the power plant.

"Our official date to get going is February 2008," he said. "But we're hopeful we can get going by the third or fourth quarter of this year."

Nick Parisi, dean of vocational education at Victor Valley College, talked about what the jobs could mean to the High Desert.

"This is definitely a growth area," he said. "We need these jobs so our community doesn't have to commute down the hill all their lives."

Experienced mechanics can top out at \$32 to \$33 an hour, but Parisi pointed out that some mechanics have

used the job as a springboard to other, more lucrative careers in aviation.

All in all, \$500,000 is needed to start the program.

It'll be there, Worsham said. "We're going to get the money and we're going to train students."

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SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2007

THE LOCAL SCENE

SAN BERNARDINO

County youth gets \$1,000 scholarship

A San Bernardino County Youth Council member and former foster-care youth was awarded a \$1,000 Dwight Brydie Scholarship on behalf of the California Workforce Association and Youth Development and Research Fund for secondary education services.

Stephen Morales was one of three recipients of the scholarship, which accepted applications from youths statewide, at CWA's seventh annual Youth Conference on Jan. 17. The program and scholarship are designed to encourage education and career development by youth.

— From Staff and Wire Reports

January 24, 2007

San Bernardino County Workforce Board Contracts with California Space Authority

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board was awarded a \$40,000 contract by the California Space Authority to help develop workers to support growing technology companies in the area. Specifically, the board will use the award to identify workforce needs and connect with educational institutions to develop training programs that address skill gaps. The information obtained from these studies will allow the board to better predict the workforce needs of business and the local economy with the goal of increasing the area's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

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Posted on: Wednesday, 28 February 2007, 09:56 CST

Aircraft Mechanic Training Takes Wing

By Darla Martin Tucker

Clatchy-Tribune Business News

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